WASHINGTON HIGHER EDUCATION COORDINATING BOARD

January 2008

Master of Education in Curriculum and Instruction
The Evergreen State College

Introduction

The Evergreen State College (TESC) requests Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) approval to offer a Master of Education in Curriculum and Instruction, beginning in the summer of 2008. The proposed program would primarily serve practicing Thurston, Grays Harbor, Mason, and Lewis County teachers who seek a master's degree with a concentration in mathematics or English as a Second Language (ESL) or who wish to obtain endorsements in those subjects. TESC already operates a Master in Teaching (MIT) program, which offers those endorsements, but that program's target audience is prospective teachers while the proposed program's target audience is practicing teachers. The proposed program would be substantially smaller than the MIT program and would not share core coursework with it. Unlike the MIT program, the M.Ed. program would not award a Residency Teaching Certificate, because almost all entering students would already have one.

Relationship to Institutional Role and Mission and the Strategic Master Plan for Higher Education in Washington

The program supports the *Strategic Master Plan for Higher Education in Washington* by expanding the opportunity for students to earn a postsecondary degree in a field responsive to the state's economic needs. Furthermore, the program is consistent with the Evergreen State College's mission to help students realize their potential.

Diversity

TESC's existing MIT program received recognition from the Professional Educator Standards Board for working with diverse faculty. In addition to maintaining an institutional culture in the proposed program similar to that in the existing MIT program, TESC intends to take proactive steps to recruit diverse students and faculty for the proposed program, including:

- Working with professional organizations like WEA, WSPA, etc., to get word of the program out to teachers of color;
- Advertising in minority news outlets, such as *Tribal College Journal* and *Latino Perspectives in Higher Education*;
- Working through minority civic organizations and tribal agencies to publicize the program;
- Offering a scholarship from the Hearst Foundation specifically for Native Students;
- Using graduate tuition waivers to support recruitment of a diverse and varied student body for the program;
- Consulting with on-campus students and faculty of color, as well as other possible external stakeholders, to vet recruitment publications and Web-based material to ensure they will be helpful to students from diverse backgrounds;
- Recruiting teachers from a variety of districts and schools including large, small, urban and tribal; and
- Face-to-face targeted recruitment focusing on TESC's track record of success and strong institutional and curricular commitment to valuing diversity within TESC's teacher education programs.

Program Need

Program planners provided evidence that the program would respond to needs of students, employers and the community.

As evidence for student need for the program, program planners cited frequent inquiries from teachers seeking accessible master of education and continuing certification programs, particularly in mathematics. Between September and November 2007, TESC received 32 inquiries, of which 28 expressed interest in the M.Ed. generally, while two inquired specifically about a mathematics endorsement and one inquired specifically about an ESL endorsement. Prior to that, TESC averaged about 70 M.Ed. inquiries per year between July 2004 and June 2007. Data on how many of those inquiries were specific to mathematics or ESL concentrations are unavailable.

Furthermore, data from personnel administrators in five large school districts near TESC suggest that 48-71 teachers per year in those districts will seek master's degrees. The numbers tend to overestimate student need to the extent that not all of those teachers would be seeking M.Ed. degrees with mathematics or ESL concentrations. However, the numbers tend to underestimate student need to the extent that TESC's recruitment area for the proposed program would be broader than those five districts.

Finally, program planners surveyed practicing teachers in Educational Service District (ESD) 113 between September and November 2007. Although it was designed to elicit feedback about the program's delivery model rather than to ascertain student need for the program, the survey provides some evidence regarding student need. The survey was distributed three times to different teachers each time, and a total of 321 teachers responded. Survey results include the following:

- Forty-nine respondents (15%) indicated that they were very likely to earn a master's degree and 215 (67%) responded that they already have one.
- Seventy-four respondents (23%) asked for additional information about TESC's M.Ed. program.

- In response to the multiple choice question, "In which of the two tracks proposed in Evergreen's M.Ed. program would you be most likely to enroll?" 94 respondents (29%) chose "Math", 60 respondents (19%) chose "English as a Second Language" and 165 respondents (51%) chose "Neither".

As evidence of employer need for the proposed program, program planners cited the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction's (OSPI's) 2004 report, "Educator Supply and Demand in Washington State", which lists mathematics and ESL as teacher shortage fields and notes that the problem in math will be exacerbated by 2009, when high numbers of mathematics teachers will be eligible to retire. Since the report is about three years old, HECB staff contacted OSPI to ascertain whether mathematics and ESL were still shortage areas today. According to our contact, mathematics still is a shortage area, while ESL barely missed the cut.

Furthermore, according to the HECB's *State and Regional Needs Assessment Report (February 2006)*, K-12 regular education teaching occupations constitute 4 out of the top 15 long-preparation, high-demand occupations in the Pacific Mountain region of the state. As the needs assessment points out, all fields are becoming more complex and require workers prepared with higher levels of education than in the past.

Finally, program planners submitted data on the numbers and percentages of K-12 English Language Learner (ELL) students taught by teachers in six school districts in the program's recruitment area. The numbers ranged from 75 (Hoquiam) to 321 (Centralia) for a total of 1,191; and the percentages ranged from 1.3 percent (North Thurston) to 7.6 percent (Aberdeen).

As evidence of community need for the proposed program, program planners cited Washington Learns and an OSPI study entitled *Addressing the Achievement Gap*. The proposed program implements Washington Learns' strategies of building expertise in math and science teaching; improving learning opportunities for English language learners; and reflecting diversity and supporting cultural understanding. The proposed program would also provide teachers with cultural competencies that would address an underlying reason for the achievement gap cited in *Addressing the Achievement GAP* (OSPI, 2002).

In addition to providing evidence for student, employer, and community need for the proposed program, the program planners provided evidence the proposed program would not unnecessarily duplicate existing M.Ed. programs. The closest institutions offering master's degrees to practicing teachers are in Lacey (Saint Martin's University), Tacoma (University of Washington-Tacoma, University of Puget Sound, Pacific Lutheran University, Lesley University, and City University), and Vancouver (Washington State University-Vancouver). Of these institutions, none offers mathematics concentrations, and only Saint Martin's University and Washington State University-Vancouver offer ESL concentrations. TESC offers the lowest tuition of any alternative.

Program Description

The 40-46 credit, 7-quarter program aims to prepare current K-12 teachers to advance in their abilities and professions by providing them with a graduate-level theoretical and practical framework for curriculum development and pedagogy. Students would engage in a core coordinated studies curriculum that would include topics such as curriculum theory, best practices, developmentally appropriate curriculum, critical pedagogy, and cultural competence. Along with the core program of study, students would have a choice

of coursework concentrations in either mathematics or ESL and would have the opportunity to prepare for endorsements in those areas, as well as for professional certification. The professional certification and the mathematics endorsement would both require coursework beyond that required for the M.Ed. degree. The program would include options for teachers who wish only to obtain an endorsement or professional certification, rather than earn a degree.

The program would not award a Residency Certificate - required in Washington for first-time teachers - because entering students would already have a teaching certificate. Consequently, the program overall is not subject to accreditation by the Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB). However, mathematics and ESL endorsement options do require PESB approval. TESC is currently in the process of applying for PESB reapproval for MIT program mathematics and ESL endorsements, and TESC staff expect that such reapproval would cover M.Ed. program mathematics and ESL endorsements as well.

Although the program is targeted primarily at working teachers, other educators such as curriculum supervisors also may be interested because of the program's focus on effective, research-based classroom practices. To be eligible for admission, applicants must hold a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution with a grade point average of 3.0 or its equivalent in the last 90-quarter or 60-semester credits of coursework. They must also have completed the equivalent of four quarter or three semester credits in child and adolescent development, lifespan development, or another human development course. In addition, applicants would submit two essays.

Students would learn to:

- Develop and deepen an understanding of the interdependent influences of brain, culture, and language development on academic achievement of all learners.
- Increase their ability to assess and address the learning needs of all students, thus increasing their positive impact on their students' learning.
- Develop effective instructional strategies, such as culturally responsive teaching, complex instruction, differentiated instruction, in order to increase the academic achievement of their students and to create an environment of equity and acceptance for all students.
- In addition to the core learning outcomes listed above, students would learn Washington State endorsement competencies related to either mathematics or ESL.

The program would use both formative and summative student assessments to support students' work and make decisions about continuation in, and completion of, the program. Formative student assessments would be used to identify areas that faculty may need to revisit or strengthen and to help participants set goals for their own growth and development. Formative assessments would include rubric and narrative feedback from faculty and peers and participants' self-assessments on a variety of program work, including in-progress seminar and research papers, lesson and unit plans, and teacher knowledge and skills. Summative assessments in the form of quarterly faculty narrative evaluations and student narrative self-evaluations would provide information about knowledge and skills that students attained. In addition, students would complete a final research project and would have to pass the Washington Educator Skills Test - Endorsements (WEST-E) exam in either math or ESL.

The program itself would be assessed in a variety of ways including:

- Analysis of faculty evaluations of student work and student self-evaluation of their own work;
- Surveys, focus groups, or interviews with program completers and principals of schools where program completers are employed; and
- Surveys of and consultations with district-level and ESD professionals, professional associations, and state agencies about the content of the program as it relates to professional educator and student learning standards.

The M.Ed. director, in consultation with the MIT director, and faculty and staff from both programs will use this information to develop and implement changes in coursework and teaching approaches.

To implement the program, TESC would rely heavily on hiring new full-time mathematics education and ESL education faculty. The importance of the new hires is evident from the fact that they would account for 2.0 out of 2.6 faculty FTE (9 month FTE) devoted to instruction in the proposed program. The remainder would be accounted for by the M.Ed. director (.33 FTE), the MIT director (.15 FTE) and part-time visiting or professional certification faculty as needed (.12 FTE). These faculty would all hold a Ph.D. or an Ed.D. degree, with the exception of the part-time visiting or professional certification faculty. The program would use existing office space and library resources, so the budget does not include any amounts for those items.

Program Costs

TESC staff estimate that the program would enroll 26.67 FTE students from its first year onward. At full enrollment of 26.67 FTE, the total direct cost budget is $354,059 or $13,275 per FTE graduate student. This is more than twice as high as TESC's MIT program direct cost of $5,834 per FTE graduate student, and it is also high relative to the direct cost per FTE graduate student in most other public graduate education programs. According to the Higher Education Coordinating Board's 2005-06 *Education Cost Study* (July 2007), the direct cost per average annual FTE graduate student in education ranged from $4,732 at Eastern Washington University to $16,534 at University of Washington-Tacoma. A significant factor contributing to the high cost of the proposed program is its low student/faculty ratio of 10.3. In comparison, TESC's MIT program has a student to faculty ratio of 21.3, and other institutions' ratios range from 7.0 at University of Washington-Tacoma to 24.2 at Eastern Washington University. The program would be state-funded, via new enrollments for Evergreen authorized by the 2007 Legislature.

External Review

Two external reviewers, Anita E. Fernández, Education Program Coordinator and faculty member at Prescott College, and Marsha Riddle Buly, Associate Professor of Elementary Education at Western Washington University.

Both reviewers indicated support for the proposed program; however, Dr. Riddle Buly conditioned her support on her expectation that two new faculty members would be hired, courses would be more fully described, elective course options for mathematics would be included in the proposal, and qualified faculty would be identified who would help plan, advise, and teach the math courses.

Both reviewers requested course descriptions and clarification of admission requirements. Program planners clarified admission requirements in the final version of the proposal. Program planners responded to the requests for course descriptions by explaining that TESC does not develop those in advance. Individual faculty members develop the courses they teach; consequently, course descriptions would not be developed until new faculty are hired.

Dr. Fernández noted that the M.Ed. director and MIT director are both highly regarded and respected in their field. She suggested the program should require a curriculum and instruction course that would "focus on curriculum theory, best practices, developmentally appropriate curriculum, critical pedagogy, etc." Program planners responded that curriculum and instruction content would be embedded within the program's core curriculum.

Dr. Riddle Buly commented positively on the program's structure, timing, emphasis on cultural competencies, flexibility to meet individual needs, and flexibility to incorporate the work of Washington Learns as initiatives develop. She also noted that both the M.Ed. director and the MIT director appeared to be experienced in program administration. She raised questions about the rationale for offering initial endorsement tracks in mathematics and ESL instead of other subjects. Program planners responded by clarifying the rationale in the final version of the proposal.

Dr. Riddle Buly also raised questions about who would bring math expertise to the proposal, since the M.Ed. director's expertise is in ESL rather than math. She raised several questions about the role of the new hire M.Ed. program faculty member for the mathematics concentration and also recommended involvement of mathematics faculty outside of education in planning and developing the math concentration's courses if the program was to include math electives. Program planners responded that TESC was conducting a national search for the position and that the M.Ed. director would work closely with the college deans and mathematics faculty to ensure an appropriate range of math electives.

Dr. Riddle Buly further recommended that TESC start a cohort in each endorsement line *only* [Dr. Riddle Buly's italics] when the new faculty members have been secured. She also suggested that, because the M.Ed. director's expertise in ESL, TESC begin the program with an ESL focus and expand to mathematics in the second or third year. She felt that a staggered start, adding math later, would provide TESC time to hire the most highly qualified applicant for the mathematics position and to coordinate with mathematics faculty outside of education.

Staff Analysis

Program planners responded positively to reviewer recommendations and suggestions, except for those of Dr. Riddle Buly described in the final paragraph of the external review section above.

The proposed program would support HECB's *Strategic Master Plan* and TESC's role and mission. In addition, TESC would make strong efforts to enhance the proposed program's diversity, despite facing the challenge of recruiting from a relatively homogeneous group of practicing educators.

Program planners provided sufficient evidence of student, employer, and community demand for the proposed program. Furthermore, the program would not unnecessarily duplicate existing programs. Although the cost of the program is high, the student/faculty ratio is low, which would benefit students.

There is some evidence that the proposed program will be of high quality. For example, TESC's MIT program has a good track record with the Professional Educator Standards Board, and presumably, the M.Ed. program would benefit from the experience of MIT program colleagues. Also, the percentage of instructional faculty effort provided by faculty not holding doctorates would be very small. Furthermore, the program's assessment plans are strong.

The quality of the proposed program depends very heavily on the quality of yet-to-be-hired mathematics and ESL education faculty. This heavy dependence necessitates a solid backup plan, in case TESC is unable to hire new faculty in time for the proposed program start date. Consequently, HECB staff requested and obtained a written commitment from TESC's Provost that TESC has identified qualified backup faculty who are:

- well experienced in teaching courses like those planned for the proposed program's ESL and mathematics concentrations; and
- willing to teach for the proposed program in the event that TESC is unable to hire new permanent faculty in time for the proposed program's start.

Staff Recommendation

After careful review of the proposal and supporting materials, staff recommends approval of the Master of Education in Curriculum and Instruction at The Evergreen State College.

RESOLUTION 08-01

WHEREAS, The Evergreen State College proposes to offer a Master of Education in Curriculum and Instruction; and

WHEREAS, The program would support the unique role and mission of the institution by helping students realize their potential, while expanding the opportunity for them earn a postsecondary degree in a field responsive to the state's economic needs; and

WHEREAS, The program would make strong efforts to enhance diversity; and

WHEREAS, The program would respond to student, employer and community needs, consistent with the HECB's *State and Regional Needs Assessment*, OSPI's *Educator Supply and Demand in Washington State*, and *Washington Learns*; and

WHEREAS, The program's low student to faculty ratio would benefit students; and

WHEREAS, The Evergreen State College has identified qualified faculty who are not only well experienced in teaching courses like those planned for the program's ESL and mathematics concentrations, but also are willing to teach for the program in the event that TESC is unable to hire new permanent faculty in time for the program's start;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Higher Education Coordinating Board approves the Master of Education in Curriculum and Instruction at the Evergreen State College, effective January 25, 2008.

Adopted:

January 25, 2008

Attest:

_____
Bill Grinstein, Chair

_____
Roberta Greene, Secretary